

LEDGE

Interviewed by **The Silver Age**, June 27th, 2024

LEDGE is a Philadelphia-based band playing what some have called “grunge” in the underground scene. Their first EP, *Gridlock*, was released on June 28th, 2024 and can be streamed on Bandcamp and Spotify.

ALICIA LOPEZ: What are your names and what do you guys play?

DOM: My name's Dom. I'm on vocals.

LYDIA: I'm Lydia. I play rhythm guitar.

LUCAS: I'm Lucas. I play drums.

MADDIE: I'm Maddie. I play bass.

HARRISON: I'm Harrison, and I play guitar.

A.L.: Are you based in Philadelphia?

ALL: Yeah.

A.L.: What genre of music would you say you play?

MADDIE: That's such a hard question because then you sound like an idiot every time you say what genre you play. I would say post hardcore – what are you supposed to say?

LUCAS: I tell people grunge.

MADDIE: I'd say like harder grunge

???: Harder grunge

LYDIA: Post hardcore is kind of ambitious

LUCAS: We just say grunge

HARRISON: Maybe just new metal?

DOM: I'm on the side of Lucas here, leaning toward grunge. I think that's a better descriptor

MADDIE: I think we play harder grunge.

DOM: I like to say crunchy grunge

MADDIE: Crunchy grunge is interesting. Grunge to me is like Alice in Chains. We're like a step further.

LUCAS: LEDGE is the voice of a generation.

DOM: I'd say we definitely have post hardcore influence, but are mostly grungy

MADDIE: It's grunge with post hardcore influence.

A.L.: Awesome. How did you guys all meet each other?

MADDIE: Me and Lucas met when we were 14 because we're both from Seattle. Collectively as a band we met November 2022. Then we met Harrison.

HARRISON: I met you guys in January because my friend, Henry Sullivan, says to me "this band needs a guitarist to fill in. Do you want to play?" I was like, "yeah, sure." Then we played and they were like, "do you want to join the band?" and I was like, "yeah, sure." I was more enthusiastic than I swear.

A.L.: That's good. Okay.

MADDIE: We [Maddie and Lucas] met in Seattle. We [Lydia, Maddie, Lucas, Dom] met at Drexel. Harrison just graduated from Haverford. Me and Lucas met when we were younger, and we used to play music together. So that's how we met, we played music together in Seattle.

A.L.: So how long have you all been playing music as a band and then individually?

LUCAS: I think together we've been playing music since November 2022, so about a year and a half. I've been playing drums since fourth grade. So I guess that's 10 years, 11-12 years. You can say 14 if you want.

MADDIE: Lucas came drumming out of the womb.

LYDIA: I have been playing guitar since I was 7. So how many years is that? 13? That's 13 years.

DOM: This is Dom. I do vocals. When I was younger, I used to do musical productions at school.

MADDIE: Dom just hopped in a band and it's one of the most talented singers ever.

DOM: I wouldn't say that.

MADDIE: I would say that you're really good for just being like, "yeah, I'll be in a band" and then you're just good. Dom is a naturally gifted vocalist.

DOM: Thank you. I also played clarinet.

HARRISON: I'm Harrison. I've been doing music stuff since I was probably around five. But I didn't start, I didn't pick up the guitar until I was 12. So I've been playing for about nine years. I didn't really start writing music until I was 17 and I hadn't played the Philly DIY show until I was 20. I'm 21 now.

A.L.: How old are all of you? I know Harrison's 21.

DOM: I'm 20.

MADDIE: The rest of us are 20.

A.L.: Okay, cool.

MADDIE: Kind of like Harrison, I've been playing music since I was five. I started on piano, so 15 years on piano and I still play now. Bass specifically, I think I've been playing for only five years, but I started playing guitar before bass and then I decided that I didn't like it, so I had the string instrument experience before that.

HARRISON: That's like the opposite for me. I started playing guitar because I wanted to learn to play bass, but we only had a guitar in my house, so I started learning bass on guitar. Then at some point I was like "fuck it, what if I start playing guitar."

A.L.: Musical influences for your band and individually?

MADDIE: My favorite bassist is D'arcy Wretzky in the Smashing Pumpkins. I love her. That's my influence for bass. I'd say, LEDGE-wise, we take influences from a lot of Superheaven. I love Superheaven.

HARRISON: Never listened to them.

MADDIE: What?! Well they're from Doylestown so you should. They're my favorite band.

LUCAS: Superchunk as well. I like them. At least *I* take some influence from Superchunk. Being from Seattle, I kind of have to take a little influence from Dave Grohl, Temple of the Dog, a lot of grunge. At least Maddie and I take a lot of influence from grunge just because we grew up playing a lot of grunge.

MADDIE: Literally all that was shoved down our throats our entire childhood was Alice in Chains and Nirvana and Stone Temple Pilots over and over again.

LUCAS: The curse of Seattle.

MADDIE: Yeah, the curse of Seattle. We could not get away from it.

LUCAS: And then we came to Philly and started playing grunge.

A.L.: My condolences. So who's involved in your music writing process, and what does that look like?

DOM: We usually start with a riff and then fill out the song. Then I go in, write words over top and figure out the melody.

LUCAS: I mean, it's kind of developed where Lydia starts to play, she starts with a rhythm, the chord progression that she is working on, then I listen to that and just kind of start playing and feel it out as I go. Then we add everyone in pretty quickly.

MADDIE: Then start developing the structure of it.

LUCAS: I'd say we tinker up until we're ready to record a song.

LYDIA: I would say that we do tend to write instrumentally before we go towards the lyrics. We tend to like to focus on the structure and make sure that we have a good base, then Dom will go in the corner and hum while we play the same thing over and over.

MADDIE: Then we show the song to Harrison and in two seconds he writes an entire lead line. That's our process.

DOM: We pretty much all write our own parts but we help each other figure things out and like to tweak everything to make it cohesive.

A.L.: I know *Gridlock* is coming out. Congrats. Is there anything you want to say about the EP?

DOM: It's about a lot of frustration with myself and also the world around me. I don't like talking about this, but okay. The first song on the EP, "Analog" is about my journey through my sexuality and sort of being in denial and the toll that it takes on you mentally and emotionally. Then, the second song, "Pressure" is about self doubt and feeling like you're not enough for the people in your life. And mainly just feeling pressure from family and then not feeling like you're able to live up to that. Then song number three...

MADDIE: The second song is actually "Dino"

DOM: Oh wait, you're so right. Well, in the order that we wrote it... Okay, so the second song is actually "Dino," the third song is "Pressure." "Dino" is about the climate crisis.

ALL: What?

LUCAS: I don't know why you guys are laughing. It's not a fucking laughing matter.

DOM: I don't really tell my band what the songs mean.

MADDIE: We did not know about the climate crisis.

DOM: The names of the songs don't really necessarily relate to the songs.

LUCAS: Dino: fossil fuels, fossil fuels: climate crisis.

A.L.: It's all coming together.

LYDIA: Even though it was unintentional.

MADDIE: Dino was just named stupidly and the last one is named ".gov" because we thought it was funny. Like the URL. That one's all lowercase. The other ones are capitalized. It's ".gov."

DOM: Okay. So, wait.

MADDIE: So ". gov" is about what?

DOM: Wait, hold on. I need to finish talking about "Dino." I literally only said climate crisis. I'm so vague. Let me think. The lyrics... hold on. Okay. There's a lot to unpack here.

LUCAS: Leave it at climate crisis.

DOM: Leave it at climate crisis? But there's so much. There's so much.

MADDIE: It's okay. They can listen to it.

DOM: Okay I guess... yeah, I do want people to interpret it for themselves. So yeah, we can leave it at that. And then ".gov" is about transportation, I guess.

LUCAS: Real. I loooove SEPTA.

DOM: It's just about being frustrated with the way that the world around me is and not being able to change it. Um, so yeah, like feeling like.... I feel like I should be looking at my lyrics. Okay.

A.L.: Are there general themes you like to explore in your writing?

DOM: I feel like *Gridlock* was mainly just about being frustrated with everything everywhere which is also why we call it "gridlock" because like you feel like you're stuck like...you don't know what "gridlock" means?

MADDIE: Don't say that!

LUCAS: That's why I whispered it.

DOM: It's when traffic is like....

MADDIE: You're stuck at a standstill

HARRISON: It's like your car pulls into the intersection and other cars are blocked and that means the cars stuck in the intersection are blocking the cross traffic.

LUCAS: Ohhh

HARRISON: So it's "gridlock" because you're feeling stuck so ".gov" is about transportation.

DOM: Yes, exactly. Thank you, Harrison

A.L.: It feels almost disrespectful to ask what you're working on now when your new EP is about to come out. But, are you working on new stuff?

MADDIE: We are. We're going to do a single after this.

DOM: Yeah. So we've got a song. I don't know – are we going to release it as a single?

LUCAS: Well, it's undecided.

MADDIE: We're working on a new song so we're deciding whether that would be a single or go with other songs that we're also working on.

LYDIA: We also want to start playing more shows more frequently, especially now that the EP is out. Now we've got music that we want to go out, share, promote, tell people about, now that we have stuff people can go back and listen to. But I feel like we just tend to stay writing. We still want to keep making a lot of stuff so that we can eventually put together a bigger project.

A.L.: That's cool. Do you want to tell us a little about how you did recording for your EP?

MADDIE: Recording-wise, we recorded here at Drexel. I'm the only music major. So that's why they passed the phone. So we use the – well [the only music major], at Drexel.

HARRISON: Yeah. I was a music minor.

MADDIE: Harrison was a music minor at Haverford. So we use the studios here at Drexel, which are super fun. We had our friend, Aly Witt.. She is in my program here at Drexel, as our producer and recording engineer. Then we had Max Lebrun, who is one half of Holy Ghost Productions, a company based at Drexel – it's a mixing, mastering production, recording company, [made up of] Henry and Max. Max Lebrun, then mixed and mastered everything and also did some production as well. We took one full 12 hour session and recorded it and then had to go back for another eight hour session to fix some things.

A.L.: Okay. How do y'all approach writing lyrics?

DOM: We write most of the music first and basically just get a really solid base for the song. Then I listen to it over and over and over again and think about how it makes me feel and sort of what I'm in the mood to write about at that time. I just start writing what sounds right for the song. Then it takes a lot of trial and error and going back and fixing it. I usually dwell on it for a few weeks because I'm always going back and changing things and making it the best that I feel it can be. Then after we have that, we might tweak a little bit of the music, then after that it's done.

HARRISON: We're tweaking.

LUCAS: We're tweaking. Yo.

DOM: We're always, always going back in and "tinkering" as Lucas would say.

A.L.: Okay. So I know you all said that you all write your own parts individually. On the demo of "Analog" that's on your Bandcamp, there are some really interesting harmony parts. How do you all figure out your harmonies?

MADDIE: I wrote the harmonies on "Analog." I do backups as well. I just take what Dom does and I, oh, well there's two.

DOM: Do you mean like instrumental harmonies or vocal harmonies?

A.L.: I was meaning vocal, but both would work.

MADDIE: Well, Dom does some really cool layering in all of the production of the EP, He does some whispering octaves and some screaming octaves. We did a lot of that, that's kind of the foundation of harmonies. Then I go in and I write backups and kind of write them there on the spot, then I sing them.

A.L.: Okay. So Harrison graduated. Are the rest of you all still in school at Drexel?

MADDIE: Yes.

DOM: Lucas is a junior and the rest of us are sophomores.

MADDIE: Well, now the rest of us are juniors and Lucas is a senior. It's not in Drexel terms.

DOM: Oh really?

MADDIE: Yeah. Because everyone else has summer off and they're going into their year. We're going into junior year and Lucas is going into senior year and Harrison is graduated.

LUCAS: When everything's said and done, I think the rest of us are graduating in 2026.

DOM: Not true.

MADDIE: Me and Lydia are graduating in 2027. Since I think we're going to stay with our prerequisites.

LUCAS: Sorry. I was wrong. Dom and I are graduating in 2026 and Lydia and Maddie are graduating in 2027.

A.L.: So we know Harrison is a music minor and Maddie is a music major. For the rest of you, are you guys self taught or musically trained?

LUCAS: When I started learning drums, my family had a friend named Neil. He was a drummer in a band, so he taught me for like a year and then afterwards I started playing in School of Rock, which I'm not sure if y'all are familiar with.

COLE GABORIAULT: Yeah, I'm familiar with that.

LUCAS: So that's where Maddie and I met. That's how I learned and practiced up until COVID and then I just kind of enjoy playing now. I feel like I'm at a level where I can just pick up the basics and improve on that where I feel like.

LYDIA: I am pretty much self taught. My dad actually plays the guitar and so I grew up with music. My main instrument which I'm best at is acoustic guitar, but I started really picking up the electric guitar when I started getting into harder music styles around COVID. I got really into grunge and I started playing heavier things. I didn't take a professional guitar lesson until I got to college, until fall of this year. I don't know how I got this far, but I did. I go to school for psychology.

DOM: I don't have any formal vocal training. I took clarinet lessons, so that's the basis for all my musical knowledge. In terms of vocals, I did have some coaching when I did musical productions at school, but not super in depth and not super rigorous. So mostly it's just natural, I guess.

A.L.: Why did you guys decide to start a band/why are you guys musicians?

LUCAS: I think we just enjoy spending time together. That kind of made the band what it is right now. I think we get along and we make each other laugh and each practice is as much enjoying time together and hanging out as it is writing and playing music. That's really shaped how we write our songs. We're really open with each other and I think that shows in our newer songs more than it does in the first ones we were writing. So yeah, I think we all just enjoy each other's company...and Harrison loves to shred.

MADDIE: That's why Harrison's in the band. Harrison doesn't like being with us, he just likes to shred.

LYDIA: And we like it when Harrison shreds.

HARRISON: So it works out.